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PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Chemical spill releases foul odor detected over many miles

LONGVIEW — An 8,700-gallon chemical spill at a Weyerhaeuser paper mill yesterday let loose an odor described as similar to cat urine or rotten eggs over hundreds of square miles in Western Washington and Oregon.

"It's a nuisance odor, but it's an awful-smelling thing," said Weyerhaeuser spokesman Rullie Harris.

The chemical compound, sulfate turpentine, is a paper-making byproduct. It spilled Monday when a tank overflowed, Harris said. Weyerhaeuser has hired a company to clean up the chemical, which is contained in a water-treatment holding pond at the mill, Harris said.

Deputy Fire Chief Dave LaFave said the odor was not dangerous. However, it can cause nausea, dizziness, headaches and eye and throat irritation, the state Department of Health said.

Tim Wyatt, who lives in West Longview, said the "cat-urine smell" drove him and his 10-month-old son, Danny, from their apartment. "It was just awful," he said.

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